

*REMARKS*

The specification and claims have been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action to which this amendment is responsive. By this amendment, claims 1 and 5-11 have been amended to improve their form and to distinguish even more clearly over the prior art of record. New claims 12-17 have been added for more completely covering applicant's invention.

Claims 1-11 were rejected as being anticipated by Beaumont (GB 2,341,850), and reconsideration of such rejection is respectfully requested in the light of the foregoing amendments. Applicant has disclosed and claimed herein a rotary printing press having an improved system for guiding sheets to and from transfer areas between sheet holding and transfer systems, such as between sheet holding and transfer cylinders. In the preferred embodiment, a sheet guiding apparatus is provided which includes a sheet guide that defines a guide surface and a pneumatic system for directing air in the sheet guide and through the guide surface for guiding sheets along the guide surface. Pursuant to the invention, a pneumatic system is provided separate from the sheet guide for directing an air stream externally over an end of the sheet guide toward the transfer area, namely toward the tangent point between sheet holding and transfer cylinders, to prevent sheet marking and smearing on the sheet guide in the sensitive transfer area. The sheet guide preferably includes a comb with fingers adjacent the transfer area and the separate pneumatic system directs air externally over the end of the comb and between the fingers to facilitate reliable sheet transfer along the sheet guide.

In contrast, applicant's prior patent, namely Beaumont, teaches a sheet guide having a comb adjacent a transfer area in which air is directed through the sheet guide surface and through fingers of the comb. The free spaces between the fingers are not pneumatically acted upon for sheet support. According to the subject invention, a pneumatic system is provided which directs over an external end of the sheet guide, and between the fingers of the comb toward the sheet transfer area for improved sheet transfer without sheet marking and smearing against the sheet guide adjacent the transfer area.

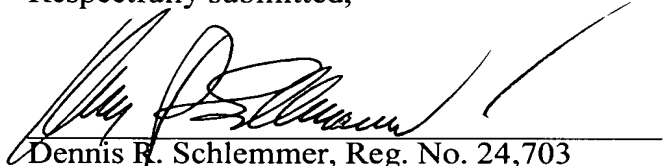
The claims as now presented all are believed to patentably distinguish over the art. Independent claim 1 calls for a sheet guide having a sheet guide surface, a first pneumatic

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system for directing air in said sheet guide and through said sheet guide surface, and a second separate pneumatic system for blowing air over an external end of said sheet guide toward the transfer area to facilitate reliable sheet transfer. Independent claim 12 calls for a sheet guide which defines a sheet guide surface and includes a comb with spaced apart guide fingers adjacent the sheet transfer area, and a pneumatic system separate from the sheet guide operable for blowing an air stream externally over an end of said comb and between said guide fingers toward the sheet transfer area to facilitate sheet transfer. The remaining dependent claims are directed to more specific features of the invention and the environment of the illustrated embodiment.

From the foregoing, it is believed that the claims as now presented all patentably distinguish over the prior art so as to be in condition for allowance. Accordingly, an early action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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